

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR NI

SUBJ: AWOLOWO'S VISIT TO GHANA

REF: LAGOS 12817

1. CHIEF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO CAME TO GHANA AS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER IN THE POSTPONED FIRST ANNUAL KWAME NKRUMAH LECTURE SERIES, SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST. FROM THE START THE VISIT WAS A HIGH VISIBILITY AFFAIR: AWOLOWO'S AIRPORT RECEPTION WAS GIVEN FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE (AMONG THOSE GREETING HIM WAS MFA'S CHIEF OF PROTOCOL); HIS MEETING WITH HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG WAS WIDELY REPORTED AND MADE THE FRONT PAGE OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC; AND ALL OF HIS SPEECHES WERE REPORTED ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE GHANAIAN TIMES AND DAILY GRAPHIC.

2. AWOLOWO'S SPEECHES, THE TOPIC OF WHICH RANGED FROM PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA TO POST-INDEPENDENCE AFRICA WERE GENERALLY REHASHES OF FAMILIAR THEMES -- APARTHEID MUST GO, AFRICAN UNITY, LAVISH PRAISE FOR NKRUMAH, ETC. HOWEVER, ON OCCASION HE WAS SURPRISINGLY CANDID. FOR EXAMPLE, IN HIS LAST SPEECH HE DECLARED, "WITH ONE OR TWO EXCEPTIONS ... AFRICAN STATES ARE GUILTY OF ACTS OF TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION TOWARDS THE MASSES OF AFRICANS IN THE SAME WAYS AS THE COLONIAL POWERS WERE. INDEED, IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE AFRICAN STATES CONCERNED ARE GUILTIER FOR UNDER COLONIAL RULE, THE VOICE OF DISSENT WAS ALLOWED TO

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BE RAISED ..." HE THEN SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED MILITARY

GOVERNMENTS FOR TAKING AWAY THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, AFTER APOLOGIZING TO THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER, LT. COL. DAWUNI WHO WAS REPRESENTING THE GHANA GOVERNMENT, AND SAID THAT TRUE PROGRESS COULD NOT BE MADE WHILE THE PEOPLE WERE OPPRESSED. (THE PRESS DID NOT REPORT HIS COMMENTS ON MILITARY GOVERNMENTS.) THIS STATEMENT PRODUCED SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE, THE ONLY PART OF THE SPEECH TO DO SO. IN ANOTHER SPEECH HE CRITICIZED THE OAU FOR ITS INEFFECTIVENESS IN DEALING WITH THE CONTINENT'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND SAID THAT ONCE THE ISSUE OF APARTHEID, WHICH HAS HELPED HOLD THE OAU TOGETHER, IS GONE THE OAU AND OTHER PAN-AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS WILL HAVE TO UNDERGO MANY CHANGES.

3. AT THE END OF THE LECTURE SERIES THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST AWOLOWO AN HONORARY DEGREE AND ESTABLISHED A CHIEF AWOLOWO PRIZE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS. AS A PARTING GESTURE OF GOODWILL, AWOLOWO DONATED TO THE PRIZE FUND THE LECTURE FEE GIVEN HIM BY A LOCAL COMPANY.

4. COMMENT: APART FROM HIS COMMENT ON MILITARY GOVERNMENT AWOLOWO DID NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS USING HIS LECTURE TOUR HERE TO WIN VOTES BACK HOME. FAR FROM ACTING LIKE A POLITICIAN ON THE STUMP, AWOLOWO SEEMED THE ARCHETYPAL ACADEMIC DISCUSSING ISSUES FROM A RATHER DETACHED, IF HACKNEYED, PERSPECTIVE. THE MEDIA ATTENTION WHICH WAS LAVISHED ON HIM WAS DUE MORE TO GHANA'S RESURGENT PRIDE IN NKRUMAH THAN TO AWOLOWO. IF IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, WE WOULD BE GLAD TO POUCH COPIES OF AWOLOWO'S PRESS COVERAGE TO LAGOS.  
GRANER

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